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AUTHOR Layton, Donald H.
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ABSTRACT

This paper is based on an analysis of 83 syllabuses and/or catalog descriptions of courses on the politics of education, educational policymaking, and policy analysis received from members of the Politics of Education Association in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia. This material provided information on what topics were being covered in politics of education classes, what texts were used, what the backgrounds of the instructors were, and where the politics of education fit in the curriculum. The first section--on course content and topics--outlines the geographic configuration of responses indicating the probability of politics in education classes being taught in various countries and states based on the responses to the initial request for data. Course foci of the syllabuses are examined next and their content and approach analyzed; two emphases are determined--politics of education courses and educational policy courses. Topics and patterns of each type are noted. Texts and readings used are highlighted next, and the most common materials are commented upon. Finally, speculations and future research are discussed, and questions needing to be answered to fill gaps in the knowledge of the subject are examined. Concluding the paper are five notes. (WTH)

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SURVEY OF POLITICS OF EDUCATION COURSES IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

DONALD H. LAYTON
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT ALBANY

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FOREWORD

Last year Michael Kirst, the president (1986-88) of the Politics of Education Association, asked if I would be interested in undertaking a course-syllabus-sharing project for the Association. I doubt that Mike had anything very elaborate in mind, but probably felt that making course syllabuses more widely available might benefit and even stimulate a number of PEA's members engaged in university teaching. While I am indeed making selected syllabuses available to professors, I felt that the syllabus project might also lend itself to some state-of-the-art analyses of the politics of education as a teaching field--where the field has been and where it may be going.

Fortunately my mailing to some 200 PEA members (many of whom were not course instructors) drew a strong, and I hope, representative response. I received a total of 83 syllabuses and/or course descriptions. Even Australia and the United Kingdom were represented, along, of course, with the preponderance of submissions from the United States and Canada. The materials I received contained a richness of information--what ideas and concepts are currently being taught in politics of education classes, what texts are required, what other readings are assigned, and what techniques are employed to convey political knowledge about education to students.

This paper is my initial attempt to describe and analyze these course syllabuses and other materials. It seeks not only to present baseline data but also to synthesize and interpret these data. In conducting this project we have found a void of information about the politics of education as a <u>teaching</u> field; this project should provide some illumination on this topic.

I am pleased that other politics of education scholars are joining forces with me in this assessment of the politics of education as a teaching field. Jay Scribner and Richard Englert of Temple University are analyzing the syllabuses, along with other materials, further to assess "what is taught?" and "what is written?" in the politics of education. Jay was the editor of the 1977 NSSE Yearbook, <u>The Politics of Education</u>, and Dick is a former editor of the <u>Politics of Education Bulletin</u>. Richard Townsend of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education has agreed to collaborate on a teaching manual for course instructors in the politics of education. Richard formerly edited the PEA newsletter and has developed an extensive syllabus for a distance course in the politics of education at OISE. One trusts that these activities will help document the extent to which the politics of education has been a legitimate and perhaps thriving teaching area in many universities.

We shall appreciate feedback from course instructors in the field about any of our activities.

INTRODUCTION

In the 1960's and 1970's the politics of education became a teaching and research field at a number of American, Canadian, and even overseas universities. The new field attracted the talents of young scholars and teachers who were determined to dispel once and for all the myth that education and politics are not strongly interrelated. The new concentration burgeoned, in particular, within departments of educational administration where many of the future leaders of public elementary, secondary, and higher education are trained. But new politics of education courses also began to appear in programs in political science, educational foundations, and elsewhere in the higher education curriculum

By the mid-1980's courses in educational politics and policymaking were no longer proliferating in university curricula. Rather, such courses had become institutionalized and a common feature of many educational leadership programs. And these courses, like earlier curricular add-ons, felt increased pressure from new fads and new directions in the curriculum. The politics of education field had matured.

From the 1960's onward, a number of state-of-the-art assessments of the politics of education began to appear in print. A major indicator of the field's maturity was the 1977 publication of The Politics of Education, Part II of the 76th Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education edited by Jay D. Scribner. (1) But a series of literature reviews and assessments of the politics of education have appeared in the past two decades. Some of the authors and co-authors of these reviews include William L. Boyd, Martin Burlingame, Peter J. Cistone, Grant Harman, Laurence Iannaccone, Michael W. Kirst, Donald H. Layton, Edith K. Mosher, Paul E.

Peterson, and Frederick M. Wirt. (2) These articles and essays tended to examine politics of education research and scholarship, not the teaching of the subject. On a pessimism/optimism continuum the authors diverged about the prospects they saw for the fledging field and its ability to generate useful theoretical as well as practical insights.

The teaching of the politics of education has received much less scrutiny than its research and scholarship. While politics of education instruction, by definition, has been dependent on the field's on-going scholarship, no one appeared interested in documenting precisely how the new field had defined itself from a teaching perspective. What topics were being covered in politics of education classes? What texts were assigned? What were the backgrounds of course intructors? Where did the politics of education fit in the broader curriculum? The literature and state-of-the-art reviews might hint at answers to these questions but specific factual information has been hard to come by.

This paper is based on an analysis of 83 syllabuses and/or catalog descriptions of courses on the politics of education, educational policy-making and policy analysis, and specific issue areas closely allied to educational politics. In October 1986 I mailed a request to about 200 members of the Politics of Education Association for course syllabuses and other class resources in the politics of education. Since the PEA mailing list did not identify whether an individual member is or is not engaged in politics of education instruction, our approach was admittedly a somewhat scattergun one. Nevertheless, during the next five or six weeks materials were collected for the 83 courses in educational politics and policy. The response was gratifying.

Unfortunately the syllabuses and other materials submitted varied greatly in their detail and information about individual courses. At one extreme were little more than catalog course descriptions and/or a short list of readings; at the other, we received literally dozens of pages documenting the activities, readings, and other components for some courses. Most (perhaps in excess of 80 percent) of the submissions were standard syllabuses, containing information about topics, readings, and other essential course matters. We were able to get a good overview of what politics of education instruction is like on most campuses.

While our data were variable and not always comparable, the materials have proved rich in documenting current goals and teaching approaches in the politics of education. Our initial decision to collect readily available information first and then consider how to generate more systematic data has proved to be sound. If we proceed to a second and third stage of this project, our endeavor will be well grounded in what this project has already revealed about the politics of education as a teaching field.

Our explorations in this paper are intended to encompass the following areas: the focus of politics of education classes, texts and other readings customarily utilized in these classes, and topics for speculation and further investigation. Our data shed little light on some matters (e.g., profiles of politics of education instructors) but illuminate many other concerns and topics. Hopefully the supplementary analyses referred to in the foreword will generate more rich interpretative data.

COURSE CONTENT AND TOPICS

The politics of education course syllabus project generated syllabuses, catalog descriptions, or reading lists for 83 individual courses. The geographical distribution of the individual courses were as follows:

Table 1. Geographical Distribution of Courses

United States	68
New York	12
California	11
Illinois	7
Texas	6
Massachusetts	5
Pennsylvania	23
Canada	12
Australia	2
United Kingdom	1
Total	83

One or more syllabuses were received from 24 states, Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom. Of the four nations Canada was the best represented in the sample on a per capita basis. The response would appear to demonstrate that the politics of education is alive and well in Canada, and is well established into the curricula of higher education. Of the American syllabuses more than 60 percent came from five states--New York, California, Illinois, Texas, and Massachusetts. These tallies suggest that politics of education courses are more likely to be taught in certain states and areas of the United States than elsewhere. The more populous states appear to be over-represented whereas some Western and Southern states are under-represented in the submissions.

One should not read too much into the geographical configuration of our course syllabuses. But the distribution does suggest that the politics of

education "movement" has had variable impact in different parts of the country.

Course Foci

One of the most fundamental analyses applied to the 83 syllabuses flowed from the following question: What are the foci of politics of education courses? What is their general orientation? Our examination of courses revealed the following breakdown:

Table 2. Categorization of Politics of Education Courses.

"Mainline" Politics of Education	47
Mixed Politics/Policy	11
Higher Education	6
School-Community Relations	4
Foundations of Education	3
Other Specialty Courses	3
Unable to Evaluate	4
Total	83

Mainline courses. The above chart indicates that almost 58 percent (N=47) of the courses in our sample could be characterized as "mainline" politics of education. These mainline courses evidenced considerable diversity in content and approach. Some of the courses were obviously more conceptual and scholarly based while other "mainline" courses were more practitioner oriented. A "mainline" course might be thus taught by a retired school superintendent or a political scientist who had not taught a day of public school in his life.

Nevertheless, there were commonalities and points of convergence in many "mainline" courses. As evidenced by our materials, these courses were generally grounded in core politics of education research findings and understandings which have been amassed in the past 2-3 decades. Typically mainline courses emphasize educational politics at various governmental levels

(e.g., federal, state, local). Or the courses may be organized, in part at least, around key concepts of political science (e.g., power, conflict). Or they may be structured around political processes affecting education. Mainline courses often do not segment levels of education (e.g., elementary/secondary, higher). If they do, they are more likely to be focused on elementary/secondary education. One suspects that higher education politics is slighted in many mainline courses.

Perhaps the scholarly versus practical dichotomy is the most obvious way in which mainline courses can be distinguished. Some syllabuses we surveyed evidenced courses with strong theoretical and conceptual underpinnings. These courses were grounded in standard and vintage works of political and other social sciences. These courses would appear to differ little in format or expectations from introductory or advanced seminars typically offered by arts and sciences faculty.

On the other hand, at the other end of the continuum were courses which were practitioner oriented. These courses used texts such as Wiles, Wiles and Bondi Practical Politics for School Administrators (3), and some instructors used this book's organizational framework (e.g., "taking charge," "maintaining control," "making changes") as organizing principles for their courses. A rough estimate is that 25-30 per cent of the mainline courses fell at the practice (or practical) end of the continuum. This probably reflects the strong affinity the politics of education as a teaching field has had with administrative preparation in education.

The most complete set of materials for a practice-oriented course we received were developed by Richard Townsend at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (Course No. 1018: The Political Organization of Education). Developed for distance education or off-campus teaching,

Townsend's materials integrate practice-oriented learning activities with readings and other resources. Many individual and group activities are suggested. One senses that the Townsend, to a greater degree than most politics of education instructors, has sought to integrate theoretical and conceptual materials with skills-based materials.

One thing is unmistakably clear from the above discussion: the mainline course designation requires further examination and analysis. More precise and descriptive groupings of courses within this category should be striven for. The basis for this recategorization may lie in some of the factors which have been mentioned in this section: practice versus scholarly orientations, the particular types of topic covered, and the like. But a re-analysis of the course materials may suggest a more apt set of categories.

Mixed and Policy Analysis. After the mainline courses in the politics of education, the next two largest categories among the 83 courses were "mixed politics/policy content" and "policy analysis." A total of 17, or 20.5 per cent, of the syllabuses was designated in one or the other of these two categories. The subjects of "policy" and "policy analysis" and their relationship to the politics of education merit further comment before examining these types of courses in greater detail.

In the past 25 years or so policy studies or the policy sciences have grown enormously at North American universities. Although it may be difficult to obtain common agreement on a definition of policy studies and what this label encompasses, the policy studies are an outgrowth of developments within several social and behavioral sciences; they were an effort to integrate constructs, conceptualizations, and research techniques and technologies across discipline lines. One central component of policy studies, policy analysis, is concerned with the methods and processes through which

governmental policies and programs can be examined and evaluated. While policy studies generally and policy analysis in particular have borrowed from political science and there is definite overlap, the two fields are distinct. Thus, educational policy analysis courses are to be distinguished from other politics of education offerings in their focus, content, and methods.

We requested course syllabuses in "the politics of education and educational policymaking" in our initial call. Our request (broader than just "politics of education") no doubt contributed to our receipt of syllabuses for courses with primary or significant emphasis on policy studies or policy analysis. Once syllabuses began to trickle in, it was apparent "policy" and "politics" content co-exist in many individual courses which instructors may designate either as "politics" or "policy." Policy studies, including policy analysis, have had considerable influence on the course structure and curricula within many education faculties.

The content of politics of education courses can be evaluated along a continuum from a policy analysis to the mainline politics of eduction focus previously discussed. We did not have sufficient data fully to evaluate precisely where all courses fit on the continuum, but attempted to develop a less rigorous rating system. For our analysis, if three-quarters of the course appeared to reflect policy (or policy analysis) content, then we included the course in the policy analysis category. Of the 20.5 per cent of total courses in our sample which were one or the other, "mixed politics/policy content" accounted for 11 courses (13.3 percent) and "policy analysis" for 6 courses (7.2 per cent).

California-based professors accounted for a disproportionate number of policy analysis offerings. As Layton noted in an earlier paper (4), California as well as New York have been focal points for policy studies programs in

education. Typically policy analysis in education courses deal with the policy cycle, from the sources to enactment to feedback arising from the implementation of policy. Professor James Guthrie at the University of California, Berkeley, offers a course which is part of the Educational Administration core at his university that deals with such topics as "strategic planning" and various technical skills related to policy analysis. Professor Allan Odden at the University of Southern California deals in one or his policy-oriented courses with "backward mapping," with the political economy" of education in California etc. Several policy-oriented courses incorporated specific exercises by which students could hone their policy analytical skills.

Rather than documenting an exclusive or predominant policy emphasis, several course syllabuses indicated that instructors had fused areas of content from mainline politics of education and policy analysis in education. As just reported, there were almost twice the number of "mixed" politics of education courses (N=11) as predominantly policy ones (N=6). While employing a general politics framework, these courses included topics and activities which related to program implementation, evaluation, or other policy-oriented themes. The mixed approach may be able to offer the best of two models: the background and understandings of the political process vis-a-vis the education sector, plus more hard-nosed skills that are incorporated into policy analysis. The latter offers possibilities for more critical thinking and allow for student participation and involvement in class activities.

The following chart indicates some comparisons and contrasts between the two emphases:

Table 3. Comparisons and Contrasts between Politics of Education and Policy Analysis Emphases

POLITICS OF EDUCATION COURSES

These courses typically use one or more of the following organizational patterns:

--- Governance or institutional approach; with attention to educational arrangements at federal, state, and local levels.

--- Issues approach, with emphasis on topics such as private schools, testing, teacher power, change, curriculum, administrative training, etc.

--- Conceptual approach, with attention to power, conflict, authority, influence or politics of efficiency, productivity, equity, and responsiveness.

--- Political behavior approach, with attention to roles and acts of individual actors.

EDUCATIONAL POLICY (POLICY ANALYSIS) COURSES

Courses with this focus usually focus on major or selected stages of the policy cycle. Topics may include.

--- policy initiation
--- defining policy problems
--- policy implementation
--- policy evaluation
--- policy termination

Courses often incorporate exercises and activities which simulate policy analysis situations.

While, as was pointed out, the politics and policy emphases are distinctive, they are not incompatible and can be complementary. Our impression is that, in the hands of a knowledgeable and competent instructor, the fusion or merger of politics/policy content can be accomplished reasonably well and with potential benefit of the learners.

Other Courses. The remaining syllabuses not classified under "mainline," "mixed politics/policy content" and "policy analysis" rubricks represented a potpourri of content and approaches. Five syllabuses for politics of higher education courses were received. More than half (3) of these courses were

taught by political scientists. These data may indicate that political scientists are more likely to be interested in higher rather than elementary-secondary education politics, though it is not clear any inferences can be drawn from our small sample. It is evident, though, that politics of higher education courses do focus upon many topics (e.g., autonomy) which are largely non-issues in elementary-secondary education.

Another set of syllabuses (4) related to courses in school-community relations. Actually one or two of these courses, except for title, differed little from courses in local politics of education and thus were, in effect, "mainline" courses. The school-community relations courses offer examples of how course content may be altered over time to conform with broader curricular changes.

The circumstances appear to be as follows. For several decades, many educational administration programs offered courses in "community relations," "school-community relations," or of similar titles. These courses were more often than not taught by practitioners or practitioner-professors and were grounded in normative notions of school and community interactions, notably from the administrator's point of view. With the growing influence of the social sciences upon educational administration programs, many "community relations" courses were transformed from their "how-to-survive-in-the-community" approach to courses which drew upon social science research and findings. The politics of education was the logical place to find course content with relevant research underpinnings.

Another area represented by more than one syllabus can be generally referred to as educational foundations. At least 3 syllabuses of politics of education courses were illustrative of this foundations focus. Essentially foundations-oriented courses emphasized historical or philosophical

underpinnings of the politics of education rather than a strictly contemporary-oriented approach. In one of the courses, historic documents constituted a dominant focus of the class activities. While each of the three instructors was not a foundations instructor, these syllabuses did also serve to remind us of the impact the policy studies have had on the foundations area. Indeed, many foundations departments were reconstituted as educational policy departments in the past two decades.

Finally we received four syllabuses, each representing a distinctive content area. These syllabuses were for courses in education law and policy, education finance and policy, multi-culturalism, and educational equity. Some, if not all, of these courses might fit better in disciplines and teaching areas other than the politics of education, and perhaps the syllabuses should have been eliminated from our data pool. But these courses do demonstrate that the politics of education (more to the point, education policy) umbrella extends far and wide. There has been an increase in courses in specialized areas of educational policy, one suspects.

Our analysis of the focus and course content of the politics of education documents the diversity of such courses. In part, this diversity many be attributable to ambiguities and complexities of the term "politics" and also the vagueness of the concept of policy where the latter is a course focus. Neither of these terms perhaps provides a clear focus for courses which purport to be about each of them. But it should also be remembered that politics of education courses are usually taught in schools of education, not in political science departments. This removes such courses from relevant and perhaps their central intellectual rootings. This factor, too, may contribute to the diversity found among and with such course.

TEXTS AND READINGS

Of major interest in the course syllabus project was the question: What texts and supplementary readings are used in politics of education classes? Textbooks as well as other required readings provide one of the best indicators of the content of politics of education courses. To be sure, some instructors may make little use of textbooks in class activities and in examinations while still requiring students to purchase them. But, on the other hand, texts are and can be powerful guides to many instructors who organize course topics and discussions around those appearing in texts.

The examination of materials in the course syllabus project demonstrated the power of textbooks on course content in several instances. The topics covered in several courses where the Wirt and Kirst text, School in Conflict, is used reflected the book's systems language (e.g., conversion process, demands). Similarly some instructors requiring the Wiles, Wiles and Bondi text, Practical Politics for School Administrators, used the chapter titles as major topics in their courses. There are doubtless many other linkages which one could identify in a careful examination of the materials we received. We doubt that politics of education instructors are any lazier than those in other fields with respect to letting textbook authors make essential decisions for them. But some instructors in the field are more dependent than they should be on textbook authors.

Our identification of the textbooks in the 83 course syllabuses and descriptions yielded the the following results:

Table 4. Required Texts and Reading Materials in Politics of Education Courses (N=83)

1.	Wirt and Kirst, Schools in Conflict	20
2.	Handouts and Reading Lists Only	16
3.	Allison, Essence of Decision	6
4.	Kirst, Who Controls Our Schools?	4
4.	Peterson, School Politics, Chicago Style	4
4.	Wiles, Wiles, and Bondi, Practical Politics for School Administrators	4
7.	Coplin and O'Leary, Everyman's Prince	3
7.	Scribner, The Politics of Education (1977 NSSE Yearbook)	3
7.	Wise, Legislated Learning	3
	Texts Not Indicated	6

(In addition, dozens of other books were required by individual instructors. Many of these titles were used by two instructors.)

What insights are revealed about politics of education courses in the above chart? One important finding is that Wirt and Kirst's Schools in Conflict is by far the most popular text in use in politics of education classes if our sample is representative. While the text was utilized in just 26 per cent of courses we analyzed, its use in mainline politics of education classes (excluding specialty and policy analysis courses) was much higher. Eliminate also the courses where handouts and reading lists substitute for required texts or where texts and readings were not indicated and Schools in Conflict would seem to have a corner on the market.

Why is this so? Our information does not provide any authoritative answers, but one can surmise some factors why Wirt and Kirst have so out-distanced the competition. One reason is currency; Schools in Conflict bears a 1982 copyright. It is a revision of an earlier collaboration by the two authors, The Political and Social Foundations of Education, published in 1975. With a slowing of published works in the politics of eduction most apparent Wirt and Kirst is one of a handful of books which continue to speak

to the mid-1980's. In the mid-1970's the instructor had more options for texts.

A second factor is that Schools in Conflict is by design a text. Unlike many politics of education studies, it is not focused upon one particular set of actors or institutions (e.g., Chicago schools) but attempts to present an overview and analysis of politics in American education generally. One suspects that the politics of education as a field of study is too small to support more than two or three texts at any time. Schools in Conflict, through two successive revisions, has managed to stay on top of the textbook market.

Third, the popularity of Schools in Conflict suggests that it is a good and versatile text. The book represents the collaboration of a professor of political science and a professor of education (though trained in government). Through its use of a systems framework and its other references to political science theory and concepts, Schools in Conflict retains a focus and scholarly base that has made it an appealing and marketable book. Further, no currently available work is likely to dislodge Wirt and Kirst in the next two or three years.

Not all politics of education course instructors will agree with the above comments. Schools in Conflict, like most texts, is not universally admired, and it fails to meet the needs which some instructors many have in teaching their courses. And in the long-term, Schools in Conflict may be unable to retain its pre-eminent position in politics of education classes. An important consideration will be whether or not Schools in Conflict will be subject to another thorough revision and update anytime soon. If not, course instructors will inevitably begin to drop the book as its pages no longer ring quite so true to educational politics in the late 1980's. As alternatives,

reading lists, prepared packages of materials, and specialized studies in the politics of education may be substituted for the textbook.

Other Texts and Studies. None of the other texts and required books used in politics of education classes approached the popularity of Wirt and Kirst, but some items were used in three of more courses for which we received syllabuses. The nearest competitor was Graham Allison's 1971 study, Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis. Since its content does not relate to the politics of education, this study is utilized for its conceptual and methodological attributes, notably its paradigms for explaining policy formulation. This book was especially likely to be required in courses with a policy or policy analysis emphasis; it is rarely used in mainline politics of education classes. Nevertheless, Essence of Decision appears to retain a timeliness for classroom use which few other studies have achieved.

Three titles were required by four instructors who submitted syllabuses. Michael W. Kirst's single-authored volume, Who Controls Our Schools: American Values in Conflict, (1984) was one of these texts. Designed primarily as an undergraduate text, the Kirst book was deemed suitable along with other required readings in the primarily graduate courses represented in the course syllabus project. Paul Peterson's School Politics, Chicago Style (1976) was also used as a text in four courses. With its application of Allison's framework to Chicago's education politics this book has retained a relevancy to the contemporary political analyses of educational issues. Wiles, Wiles, and Bondi's Practical Politics for School Administrators (1981) was also used in four courses in our survey. Our analysis suggests that this book, not surprisingly, was more likely to be used in practitioner-oriented classes. This would appear to be the market for which the book was primarily intended.

Three additional books were utilized as texts by three instructors participating in the course syllabus project. These were Coplin and O'Leary's Everyman's Prince, Jay D. Scribner' edited 1977 NSSE Yearbook, The Politics of Education, and Arthur E. Wise's Legislated Learning: The Bureaucratization of the American Classroom. In addition, there were numerous books used in two courses for which we had syllabuses. A large number of these books were classics or texts commonly used in political science courses. Schattschneider's The Semisovereign People is one example of a political science classic. Works by Lindblom, Dahl, and other political scientists were also used as texts in several classes.

The remainder of texts required by lone instructors constituted a hodgepodge of historical, foundations of education, economics, legal, as well as political science studies. Familiar names such as Elazar, Dye, and Edelman, are found in this listing. But the focus and content of these books illustrate that the politics of education remains an eclectic and not clearly defined area of inquiry.

Sixteen courses (19 per cent) of our 83 total sample utilize reading lists or sourcebooks in lieu of standard texts. Entries on reading lists may be placed on reserve in the college library and thus made accessible to all students. Sourcebooks may contain photocopies of relevant articles, chapters, or other materials and may be made available by the instructor or by the bookstore. Copyright laws, however, do raise questions about photocopying multiple copies of classroom materials. These individualized approaches to course materials obviously have advantages in allowing the instructor to tailor readings to class discussions and in exposing students to a richer array of content and ideas than one test would provide.

Commentary. The textbook has been a major resource in higher education just as at lower grade levels in education. Yet it tends to be less of a teaching anchor as one moves up the educational ladder. At the graduate level course instructors ordinarily rely on many different types or resource materials; no text is likely ever to dominate totally such instruction. These considerations are relevant to the politics of education, a teaching field almost exclusively based in graduate studies.

A major criterion for most instructors in adopting a textbook in the politics of education is likely to be its currency. Few, if any, studies focused upon the politics of education have achieved a historical or classical status. (Many political science works could be so characterized and a few are used in politics of education classes). The absence of classical studies on educational politics means that the values of topicality and currency are not greatly challenged in adoptions of politics of education texts. As has been previously pointed out there is only one current text, Schools in Conflict, in the politics of education today. (Perhaps Kirst's Who Controls Our Schools should also be listed, but it has not cracked the graduate market, presumably because it is regarded a more elementary text.)

Since the politics of education is a particularly time-sensitive field of inquiry, its textbooks must be constantly updated to remain highly competitive. From 1975-77 there were several books widely available which had textbook adoption potential in the politics of education. Among these were books like John Thomas Thompson's Policymaking in American Public Education (1976); Paul Peterson's School Politics, Chicago Style (1976); the 1977 NSSE Yearbook, The Politics of Education, as well as Wirt and Kirst's 1975 text, the forerunner of Schools in Conflict. A course instructor at that time had a choice of texts, which exceeded that today.

But time has had a way of reducing textbook alternatives for course instructors in the politics of education. The Thompson text, published by a major book concern (Prentice-Hall), is no longer widely used if at all. Our survey showed its use as a text in only two courses, and these had been offered in 1983 and before. The NSSE Yearbook, while perhaps remaining more timely than the Thompson text, is no longer in high demand. Unfortunately many social science texts and other studies are virtually dated by the time they appear in print, given the fact that writing and publication schedules may consume years. While much political behavior in education persists for years, broader political, social, and economic events do impact on educational politics more than in other areas.

Although the politics of education is admittedly a narrowly focused field, one might hope for a more competitive text situation in the future. Whether alternative textbooks will be available to politics of education instructors in the 1990's will remain problematical at best. Yet surely the politics of education as a teaching field will demonstrate more vitality in the years ahead if several textbook options exist for course instructors--options reflecting different foci, different analytical frameworks, and varying ideological underpinnings. Two of the most widely used texts (5) in the 1970's and early 1980's have been heavily indebted to David Easton's systems analysis approaches. While we do not wish to deprecate Easton's scholarly contributions to political science, some competing or newer analytical frameworks might generate more excitement in the politics of education in the years ahead.

SPECULATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This paper has sought to present and, to a lesser extent, to analyze data gathered from an examination of 83 course syllabuses and course descriptions in the politics of education. These materials, however, need to be further examined and analyzed, for our discussion has merely skimmed the surface regarding data and insights these submissions contain about politics of education instruction in the United States and Canada. For example, as mentioned earlier, the "mainline" category of politics of education needs to be further divided along precise content or focus lines. The texts and readings also can be categorized more precisely than is attempted here, and there are also masses of data in the materials about class activities which are not discussed in this paper.

Hopefully further descriptive and analytical work can proceed in the coming months. At the same time our preliminary effort to analyze the 83 sets of materials has revealed a number of questions and information gaps. These need to be addressed if we are to have a more complete and accurate understanding about politics of education classes and their place in the broader university setting. What is required are new sets of data which will fill in many of gaps of knowledge fully in evidence in our materials and which will illuminate aspects of politics of education instruction not immediately apparent in course syllabuses. Here are some of those questions:

(1) Who teaches the politics of education, and what details of their backgrounds may be relevant to politics of education instruction?

Surely we would know more about the politics of education if we knew who teaches the subject matter. What are the academic backgrounds of course instructors? How much political science and related policy science coursework

did they have in their doctoral studies? Where did the politics of education instructors study? Or, for that matter, how many political scientists are engaged in teaching the politics of education?

Academic backgrounds of course instructors is, of course, only one type of personal data. Also of interest are baseline demographic data. What is the median age of instructors? Are there a significant number of women in the teaching area? It is easy to speculate on most of these questions; yet it is not at all clear whether these speculations necessarily have much validity. The median age of course instructors has probably been on the rise in recent years reflecting general demographics of higher education and there appear to be very few women engaged in politics of education instruction. But doubtless, empirical data might bring some surprises.

(2) Are there "networks" among politics of education teachers and researchers, and if so, what are the bases of these networks?

These questions are somewhat complementary to some of those raised above (Question 1). They seek to determine the linkages and relationships which exist in the politics of education community among scholars, teachers, former students, and other principals. The course syllabus project indicated that these linkages may be important in what gets taught and how it gets taught in the politics of education. Based on a cursory examination of syllabuses, some tentative linkages or networks may be posited between established figures in the field and their former students. The latter are likely to use the works authored by their former mentors; they may pattern their own politics of education courses after the courses they sat through as graduate students. While networks at best may be highly informal and ill-defined, our preliminary survey indicates instructors in major graduate centers like Chicago or Stanford may be focal points in these linkages.

(3) Where do politics of education courses fit into the higher education curriculum --in education or in political science?

We can almost dismiss immediately political science because the politics of education has not gained a significant foothold in political science curricula. There are occasional offerings in the politics of education in some political science programs. Sometimes political scientists teach politics of education courses in faculties of education on a cross-registration basis (course listed both in political science and education programs of study). While political scientists continue to engage in politics of education research, they are less likely to teach in specific courses in the field; this, perhaps, relates primarily to how political science has conceptualized its major teaching areas.

Politics of education instruction is thus to be largely found in schools of education. Some questions for further research include: What programs of study (in education) include politics of education courses? Are these courses required or optional? Is the politics of education a core requirement of masters or doctoral programs of study? Is a politics of education course required for administrative certification in any of the 50 states? Has the politics of education gained a foothold in education outside programs of educational administration? Are there any trends related to politics of education requirements?

(4) How current is politics of education instruction?

The politics of education, like other fields taught primarily in professional programs, suffers from a discipline related lag. Many course syllabuses did reflect political science interests (and its state of the art) in the 1950's and 1960's; examples are seen in references to debates over research into community power structures which were then the rage. Many --

perhaps a clear majority -- of mainline courses are still organized around local, state, and federal levels of government. Some courses have yet to be permeated by the behavioral revolution in the social sciences! Thus, the question of time lag and the relevancy of course content arises.

Some answers to the following kinds of questions need to be ferreted out. How timely are the materials taught in politics of education classes? Is there a time lag in the presentation of social science insights and paradigms in these classes? If so, what is the nature and extent of the time lag? What are the consequences of a time lag, if any? How can more timely materials be incorporated into politics of education classes if this would appear desirable?

(5) Where are politics of education courses most or least likely to be taught in terms of types of universities? in terms of geographical considerations?

The course syllabus project revealed that politics of education courses are not evenly dispersed throughout the United States (we made no effort to come to a similar judgment about Canada). Politics of education courses appear to be concentrated in the more populous states, with some areas of the country little impacted by the movement. If these generalizations are largely true, then why is this the case? Similarly the politics of education appears to be more popular as a teaching field in larger, more research-oriented universities. But our data are not complete, and our interpretations may be suspect. Yet one can perhaps get a better understanding of the scope and significance of the politics of eduction as a teaching field if these factors are better understood.

The list of questions regarding politics of education teaching can be expanded further. This concluding discussion identifies several topics worthy of investigation and analysis. Hopefully some scholars and researchers will take up the challenge.

END OF NOTES

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